Towards a More Resilient Aotearoa
Our Forum, along with many other New Zealanders, want a future very different from the present. During the Covid-19 lockdown, we saw glimpses of this ‘alternative future’: walkable cities, enhanced links with local communities, connection with ‘neighbourhood nature’ and a hiatus from our relentless consumerism and fossil fuel-hungry travel habits.

We don’t want to return to the ‘old normal’ – we want to prosper in a world where we live within planetary boundaries and are restoring the damage of the past. This cannot be achieved by small, incremental changes. We need fundamental, system-wide change in the way we live and interact with the world.

This manifesto sets out our vision for the future and the key ways in which we see it can be achieved.

Help us to make this vision for the future of Aotearoa New Zealand a reality.
TOWARDS A MORE RESILIENT AOTEAROA

Our mission is to create broad momentum for a transition towards a more resilient Aotearoa. We know that we can do this. But we need systems thinking that integrates mātauranga Māori and Te Tiriti principles, and leadership both within government and across all sectors in the community.

We must act immediately to:

• transition to a climate-neutral, zero waste economy
• protect and restore land, freshwater and marine ecosystems
• create an equitable society that prioritises wellbeing over monetary wealth.

The Better Futures Forum is a forum of passionate experts across all the areas of our mission including fresh water, regenerative land use, mātauranga Māori and energy. This document outlines our direction to government on the means by which this vision can be achieved, and includes recommendations on some actions that could be taken immediately.
TRANSITION TO A CLIMATE-NEUTRAL, ZERO WASTE ECONOMY

The government, alongside industry, needs to make fundamental changes to our economy and the way we use resources so that we can transition to a climate-neutral, zero waste economy.

HOW THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED:

ECONOMY

• Diversification of our economy, focusing on knowledge-based enterprise and high-value products and services
• Investment in research and development to decarbonise the economy.

WASTE MINIMISATION

• Require manufacturers and importers to be responsible for the whole life of their products
• Investment in NZ-based initiatives for repurposing and recycling materials. Any materials that cannot be repurposed or recycled should be eliminated from circulation.

TRANSPORTATION AND URBAN PLANNING

• Transition to low-emission transportation networks and flexible working models
• Urban planning that is fully integrated with transportation and other life needs, exemplified by ‘20-minute neighbourhoods’.

ENERGY

• Investment in energy-efficient homes and buildings, prioritising social housing
• Minimise waste in the energy network, through structural and behavioural change.

For more information on energy and transport contact Glen Baxter at glen.baxter15@gmail.com or call 027 768 6464.
THE 20-MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The 20-minute neighbourhood concept is all about ‘living locally’— giving people the ability to meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute walk from home, with access to safe walking, cycling and local transport options.

International experience show that enabling people to live in vibrant local communities not only reduces emissions, but it also boosts local prosperity, as well as educational, and health and wellbeing outcomes.

Contact Dr Catherine Knight at bff@bff.org.nz for more information.
WHAT COULD BE DONE NOW

A climate change neutral and zero-waste future is within our reach if we:

• Enact legislation requiring all government bodies/publicly owned enterprises to meet zero carbon targets
• Build the Auckland Light Rail Project, integrated with urban and residential development
• Develop policy on integrated urban design to support transition to a low-emissions economy
• Develop central government direction for walkable cities
• Incentivise flexible working policies across public/private sector to encourage less travel at peak traffic times
• Ban single-use plastics
• Introduce regulations to institute producer/importer responsibility for waste products and harmful materials
• Boost investment in community recycling schemes
• Introduce mandatory product labelling for environmental impacts (greenhouse gas footprint, food miles, water footprint etc).

For a better future, design our cities for a low-emissions economy.
PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF LAND, FRESHWATER AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS

Our natural environment has become increasingly degraded because of the way we live and use land. We need to make fundamental changes to the way we live and use our natural resources, not just to minimise this damage, but to restore these degraded systems.

HOW THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED:

- De-intensification of agriculture and transition to regenerative practices
- Water-sensitive design for all new urban development
- Incentives to restore depleted land ecosystems – wetland, coastal forest and lowland forests.

For more information call Dr Mike Joy 021 936 205 or email mike.joy@vuw.ac.nz.
WHAT COULD BE DONE NOW

• Support land managers (across farming, horticulture and forestry) to transition to regenerative land use practices through access to funding and expertise

• Protect all highly productive land (to support food production and increase economic resilience)

• Phase out synthetic nitrogen fertilisers within 5 years

• Introduce pathways for retraining and long-term employment for those out of work through schemes/projects which support ecosystem restoration

• Simplify carbon sequestration scheme to incentivise afforestation with native species.
AN EQUITABLE SOCIETY WHERE WELLBEING IS PRIORITISED OVER MONETARY WEALTH

We need a future where everyone can flourish. We must start taking the first steps now by redefining what a prosperous society is. This can no longer be measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP); it must be measured by the wellbeing of our people and the natural environment.

HOW THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED:

- Primary measure of national ‘wealth’ encompasses social and environmental wellbeing (not GDP)
- Te Tiriti principles are honoured in all our societal transactions and relationships
- The provision of sufficient free public services to ensure every New Zealander’s wellbeing and to provide for full participation in society (Universal Basic Services).

For more information contact Dr Catherine Knight at bff@bff.org.nz.
Or contact Tanya Ruka at tanya.ruka@yahoo.co.nz.
WHAT COULD BE DONE NOW

- Boosted support for apprenticeships/on-the-job training, especially for trades
- Remove GST on NZ-grown fresh fruit and vegetables
- Home insulation subsidies.

For a better future, wealth must be measured by the wellbeing of our people and the natural environment.